

Congressman

G.K. Butterfield
1st District of North Carolina



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House Continues to Focus on Jobs

May 11, 2010

The Department of Labor provided some positive news last week, indicating the economy created 290,000 jobs last month. This is the largest number of new jobs in four years, and the fourth consecutive month of job growth.

While the economy has gone from losing 750,000 jobs per month at the end of 2008 to steadily creating jobs, we still have a long way to go.

Last week, the House took another step toward helping to put Americans back to work by passing the Homestar Energy Retrofit Act, which is projected to create 168,000 new jobs in America's construction, manufacturing, and retail industries.

In addition to creating job, it would also help three million middle-class families make their homes more energy efficient, saving them \$200 to \$500 in energy costs per year.

The bill features two levels of rebates – the Silver Star and Gold Star. The Silver Star program would provide up-front rebates of up to \$3,000 for the installation of proven energy-saving technologies, such as insulation, duct sealing, window and door improvements, air sealing, and advanced water heaters. The Gold Star program rewards homeowners with up to \$8,000 for conducting a comprehensive energy audit and substantially reducing their energy use at home.

This bill would provide a needed boost our construction and manufacturing industries, and more than 90% of the materials and products used in eligible measures are made in the U.S.

This legislation builds on the previous effort of tax credits for energy-efficient home improvements included in the Recovery Act. Through the end of 2010, homeowners can receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost of these improvements, up to \$1,500. More information is available at <http://www.energysavers.gov/financial>.

Economic Development Professional Added to Staff

An Elizabeth City resident has been added to my staff to serve as Director of Economic Development and Business Outreach.

With 10 years of economic development experience in eastern North Carolina, Russ Haddad understands the people, process and the resources. He will be a valuable asset to the communities I represent.

Russ had been working as the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development Direct of Tourism Development in Raleigh. He previously worked as Director of the Elizabeth City Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, and as Tourism Director of the Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce.

Russ will be based in Wilson, and he will work actively with communities, constituents and businesses to increase access federal resources. He will assist with issues related to planning, community development, neighborhood preservation, jobs creation, business expansion and retention, and federal grants and appropriations.

There are a great number of pressing needs in eastern North Carolina. We need to make sure that the available federal resources are being maximized in meeting those needs. Russ will certainly be a valuable conduit in making sure that happens.

Russ will also act as an economic development liaison with statewide officials, local business leaders, small businesses, foundations and charitable organizations, state and local Chambers of Commerce, North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center and the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

We continue to look for ways to help boost the region's economy, and adding an experienced and knowledge resource like Russ to the staff will help.

While there have been some positive economic signs, there are still far too many struggle families and communities in need of help. I want to make sure that I am doing everything I can to help create good jobs.

Russ lives in Elizabeth City and has been active with the Elizabeth City Jaycees, Elizabeth City Boys Club and Pasquotank Arts Council. He has also volunteered as a youth soccer coach and with the J.C. Sawyer Elementary School PTA.

Washington, DC Office

413 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC, 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3101
Fax: (202) 225-3354

Wilson Office

216 West Nash Street Suite B
Wilson, NC 27893
Phone: (252) 237-9816
Fax: (252) 291-0356

Weldon Office

309 West 3rd Street
Weldon, NC 27890
Phone: (252) 538-4123
Fax: (252) 823-0236

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